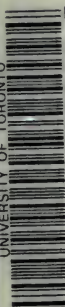


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ADAPTED BY JOHN BROUGHAM.



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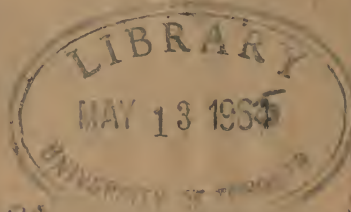
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DAVID COPPERFIELD.

A DRAMA, IN THREE ACTS.

ADAPTED FROM DICKENS' POPULAR WORK OF THE SAME NAME,

BY JOHN BROUGHAM.



Dramatis Personæ.

[See page 12.

First Performed at Brougham's Lyceum, Monday, January 6th, 1851.

WILKINS MICAWBER	Mr. John Brougham.	BAILIFF	Mr. Wisc.
ARIAH HEEP	Mr. John Owens.	STEEBFOETH	
EGGOTTY	Mr. H. Lynne.	AGNES WICKFIELD	Miss Taylor.
DAVID COPPERFIELD	Mr. D. S. Palmer.	BETSY TROTWOOD	Mrs. Vernon.
TRICKFIELD	Mr. H. B. Phillips.	CLARA PEGGOTTY	Mrs. Brougham.
ARKIS	Mr. H. Hunt.	MRS. MICAWBER	Mrs. George Loder.
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COSTUME.

MICAWBER.—1st dress: Ragged dressing-gown—plaid vest—black tights—shoes and gaiters. 2nd dress: Short black coat—white vest—rest as before.

URIAH HEEP.—Black ill-fitting dress.

PEGGOTTY.—Blue pea-jacket—wide blue trousers—check shirt.

HAM.—Sailor's suit.

DAVID COPPERFIELD.—Handsome morning dress.

WICKFIELD.—Black dress-coat—gray vest—black trousers.

BARKIS.—Large over-coat, with capes—breeches and top-boots.

AGNES.—White morning-dress.

BETSY TROTWOOD.—Dark travelling-pelisse—quaint bonnet.

CLARA PEGGOTTY.—Neat cotton dress.

EMILY.—1st dress: Plain light muslin. 2nd dress: Dark dress.

STAGE DIRECTIONS.

EXITS AND ENTRANCES.—R. means *Right*; L. *Left*; D. F. *Door in Flat*; R. D. *Right Door*; L. D. *Left Door*; S. E. *Second Entrance*; U. E. *Upper Entrance*; M. D. *Middle Door*; L. U. E. *Left Upper Entrance*; R. U. E. *Right Upper Entrance*; L. S. E. *Left Second Entrance*; P. S. *Prompt Side*; O. P. *Opposite Prompt*.

RELATIVE POSITIONS.—R. means *Right*; L. *Left*; C. *Centre*; R. C. *Right of Centre*; L. C. *Left of Centre*.

R RC C LC L.

. The Reader is supposed to be on the Stage, facing the Audience.

DAVID COPPERFIELD.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—Miss Trotwood's Apartment. DICK discovered *E.*, seated, and making a Kite. MISS TROTWOOD trimming garden-pot, with knife and gloves, *as in Picture.*

Miss T. It is really time, high time, that something should be done for David. Don't you think so, Mr. Dick? (*Dick nods.*) I knew you would. They call that man mad, the fools—he is as sharp as a surgeon's lancet—has more sense than a whole bench of bishops! Donkeys, donkeys, Janet! (*Dick laughs.*) Don't be a fool, Mr. Dick—don't be a fool, whatever you are! You're heard me mention David Copperfield—now don't pretend not to have a memory, for I know better.

Dick. David Copperfield? Da-vid—oh, yes—yes!

Miss T. You know he has been living with me some time, and the question I put to you is, what am I to do with him?

Dick. Do?

Miss T. Yes, do! Come, I want some very sound advice. What shall we make of him?

Dick. (*Considers a moment.*) A kite.

Miss T. Now, some people would consider that a foolish answer, but it's full of meaning to me. A kite, Mr. Dick? Certainly, every man must have a kite—that is to say, an occupation, or he could never—

Dick. Fly!

Miss T. He means aspire. Sagacious Dick! Donkeys, Janet! Ah! here comes David, and that friend and school-fellow of his, Mr. Steerforth. Good exterior—but I'm afraid—

Dick. Bad egg!

Miss T. And they say that man's mind's diseased! Pooh! the whole human race are imbecile!

Enter DAVID and STEERFORTH, c.

David. My dear aunt, Steerforth and I have had such a gallop round the town, looking at the beauties of the scenery.

Steer. And investigating the loveliness of the female population.

Miss T. Pshaw! Donkeys!

Dick. Both!

Miss T. David, sit down. I want to have some serious conversation with you, if your vivacious friend will condescend to suppress his animal spirits. Donkeys!

Steer. My dear madam, my very spirits are at your command! My thermometer is below freezing point, since you wish it.

Miss T. Sit down, then—sit down.

Dick. Stop! Can anybody recollect the date when King Charles had his head cut off!

David. In the year sixteen hundred—

Miss T. Hush! Mr. Dick, no nonsense!

Dick. Certainly not—but I should like to know, if his head was cut off, what they did with it! They had no right to put it on my—

Miss T. Mr. Dick, it's time for you to go to bed!

Dick. Oh, no!

Miss T. Dick!

Dick. Oh! a—yes—certainly—I must take my kite.

[*Exit Dick, R. H.*

Steer. Isn't the gentleman a little out of his mind?

Miss T. No, sir, not half so much as you are. The whole end and aim of his existence is not confined to the enriching of tailors. He has been called mad, or I should not have had the benefit of his society and advice for ten years. Nice people they are, who had the audacity to call him so! Why, his own brothers, if it had not been for me, would have shut him up for life! Many and many a delicate mind has been tortured into madness, by the knaves who thirsted for their wealth, or the fools who did not understand the subtlety of their organization.

David. I'm afraid that's too true, dear aunt.

Miss T. I know it is! David, what are you going to do for a living?

David. Indeed, aunt, that very question has given me hours and hours of uneasiness.

Miss T. You must do something, you know. I can't support you—wouldn't if I could!

David. I was thinking of going to London, to seek for some employment.

Miss T. You were?

David. This very day.

Miss T. Go!—Have you thought of the proctorship?

David. Yes, aunt, and I have only one difficulty. Miss T. Say what it is, Trot. I shan't call you David any more, except you annoy me.

David. I am afraid my entrance into that branch of the legal profession would be very expensive—and, my dear aunt, you have expended a great deal already upon my education; and I do imagine that it would be better for me to begin life without such a large outlay to you.

Miss T. David, it will cost just one thousand pounds. I'll pay it.

David. Are you sure you can afford it, dear aunt?

Miss T. Trot, my child, if I have an object in

life, it is to provide for you being a good, a sensible, and a happy man. I'm bent upon it—so is Dick.

Steer. Now, my good friends, there's no need of your taking so much pains about the matter. Copperfield can never want anything as long as I live! Where's the necessity to poke his nose into dusty old ledgers, and pine away his life in a dusty office, when I can share my independence with him? Come and live with me, David, and be a gentleman.

Miss T. Donkeys! You're a fool! I don't mind my words!

Steer. Upon my life, you don't!

Miss T. David, remember what I said! Donkeys!
[Rushes out c.

Steer. Well! Of all the savage and incomprehensible old she—hippopotamusses.

David. Silence, Steerforth! She is my most valued relative and friend.

Peg. (Outside.) Mas'r Davy bo' in here? Heave ahead! (Enter PEGGOTTY, c., and rushes to David.) Why, Mas'r Davy, bo', gi' us a hug! My heyes, how you be growed!

David. Do you think so?

Peg. Out of all knowledgeableness! Ain't he growed!—I humbly begs pardon, sir?

(To Steerforth.)

David. That's my friend, Mr. Steerforth—an old schoolfellow.

Peg. Anybody as has ketched a-hold of Mas'r Davy's hand in friendship has made his mark upon my kalendar! I'm glad to know'ee, sir.

David. Well, Mr. Peggotty, and how is Mrs. Gummidge?

Peg. On-common, sir!

David. And little Em'ly?

Peg. Em'ly!—Little Em'ly! Bless hersoul and body! She ain't little Em'ly no more, bless you—she's grow'd, too,—on-common. Sich heyes, Mas'r Davy—sich larnin—sich writin. Writin! Why, Mas'r Davy, bo', it's as black as jet, and so large, you might see it anywhere.

Steer. You seem to be very much attached to this little Em'ly, as you call her.

Peg. I don't ezactly know what that means, sir—but if it sinafys that I love her—why, the biggest book as ever was printed hasn't words enough to say how much. For to say that I love her better nor my own life ain't nothin! There's one thing more as I has to say, Mas'r Davy, bo'—but I doesn't know rightly how to pay it out. You're a goin' into the world soon, maybe?

David. This very day, I believe, I make preparations to go to London.

Peg. Well, all as I've got to say, is this here—that if maybe, in your kindness, you'd honor us so far as to take Yarmouth in your way, all on us, from Mother Gummidge to Em'ly, would take it as a favor on-common! It's a very humble place, as you know, but there's hearts there, Mas'r Davy, as beats as true for you, as the best chronometer in the Admiralty House!

David. I would certainly do so, Peggotty, but I am pledged to my friend Steerforth. We travel together?

Peg. Let him come, too, sir. A welcome ain't made smaller by stretching on it out. Won't you honor us, too, sir?

Steer. Egad! I've a great mind, if it's to see this Yarmouth Venus!

David. What say you, Steerforth?

Steer. I'm with you! Anything to pass the time agreeably. Methinks I scent an adventure!

Peg. Bravo! That ere's all right! Now I must weigh anchor.

David. No, no! You must stay and see my aunt, and have some luncheon.

Peg. Well, since so be you're so kind, and hevery thing is so quiet and calm in this here harbor—(donkey's head through window)—hello, messmet;

Enter MISS TROTWOOD.

Miss T. Ah! Donkeys!

(Takes up umbrella, and bangs donkey.)

SCENE II.—A handsome Chamber.

Enter WICKFIELD and COPPERFIELD, R. H.

Wick. I am sorry, David, very sorry, that you cannot remain with us for some time. It has been lonely, very lonely for Agnes and me, since you have left us,—and that fellow, Heep—(Looking round fearfully.)—Your worthy aunt is now with Agnes; I expect them here presently. David, I understand your astonished look. You see an alteration in me; I know you do; don't attempt to prevaricate. I am not the Wickfield you knew. Heaven help me, no!—but it can't be helped. My Agnes, my darling! when I think of you, and the quick current which is driving me along, what can I do but rush to the—Ah! here they come! Say nothing, David—I think nothing of my words; they have no meaning.

[Exit, R. H.

David. My poor friend! you are in the toils of that demi-devil, Heep! I feel it.

Enter AGNES and MISS TROTWOOD, L. 1. E.

My dear Agnes!—Annt, you are here before me! Have you left Mr. Dick?

Miss T. Yes, and I'm sorry for it. I'm afraid he wants strength of purpose to keep off the donkeys. If ever there was a donkey trespassing upon my green, there was one at four o'clock this afternoon! A cold feeling came over me, from head to foot, and I know it was a donkey! But come, to business—where's Mr. Wickfield?

Agnes. He'll be here directly.

Miss T. There he is in the library. I'll go and speak to him. (Crosses R.) Wait here, Trot, until I come back.

[Exit into room, R. H.

David. Well, Agnes, my sister, my good angel! I am delighted to see you once more!

Agnes. You are kind, David, very kind; but I know that you assume this cheerfulness of manner—for you must have perceived the great, the miserable change in my dear father and in myself.

David. I never saw you looking so radiant, Agnes.

Agnes. Ah, David! this house is not the cheerful home of pure, domestic joy it was when you left us. Uriah—

(Looking around.)

David. What of him?

Agnes. You know that he has become a partner with my father?

David. What! Uriah! That mean, fawning fellow, worn himself into such promotion?

Agnes. Uriah has made himself indispensable to father. He has mastered his weaknesses, fostered them, and taken advantage of them,—fed and

stimulated what was but a transient inclination, until it became a necessity, until—I am ashamed to speak the word—my father fears him.

David. Fears that subtle hound!

Agnes. Hush! hush! don't speak so loudly, David. Ah! I fear him, too—but only for my father's sake. His position is one of power, I don't know how obtained—and I fear to inquire; but still he uses it with cruel wickedness! My only trust is, that if any fraud or treachery is practised against him, simple love and truth will be the strongest in the end.

David. The mean, crawling ingrate! I'll put an end to all your dread.

Agnes. No, no! not for your life! Promise me that you will not interfere, or even, by a look or action, show that you imagine anything but that we are all on terms of friendship.

David. Your request is most mysterious, Agnes; but I shall obey you. Ah, he is here!

HEEP appears at D. F., and enters.

Heep. (Coming down, c.) Don't let me interrupt your conversation, my dear Miss Agnes. Ah, bless me! can it be?—My dear Mr. Copperfield, how long it is since we had the pleasure of seeing you. (Shakes hands.) How do you do?

David. (R.) Very well, indeed, Mr. Heep. (Aside.) His hand is as fishy as ever.

Heep. (C.) Why do you say Mr. Heep? You know how humble I am. Now, do call me Uriah. Though my circumstances have changed, yet I am as humble as ever. Won't you call me Uriah? Agnes calls me Uriah—don't you, Agnes?

Agnes. (L.) Yes, Mr. Heep—I mean Uriah. I think I hear my father—pray, excuse me.

(Crosses to R.)

Heep. Oh, certainly. Don't neglect your dear and worthy father. [Exit Agnes, c.] Well, Mister Copperfield—I wish you'd let me call you David.

David. Sir?

Heep. Well, never mind. You know how humble I am—you have heard something, I daresay, about the change in my circumstances, David—I mean Mr. Copperfield!

David. Yes—I have heard—

Heep. Agnes—told you, no doubt?

David. Why—a—

Heep. Yes—I see she did? What a prophet you are, Mr. Copperfield! Do you remember once saying that I should be a partner in the house of Wickfield and Co.? You forget it, no doubt, but I don't. When one is humble, he treasures everything—but the humblest persons may be enabled to do good, and I have had that blessing strewed on my path. I have done good to Mr. Wickfield, and to Agnes. I remember how you said one day, that everybody must admire her. You have forgot that, no doubt?

David. (Aside.) What is the hound driving at? I must discover! So, Mr. Wickfield has been imprudent, Uriah?

Heep. Oh, very—very? But I'm so glad to hear you call me Uriah! It's like the blowing of balmy breezes, or the ringing of bells, to hear you say Uriah!

David. How so, Uriah?

Heep. It's a topic, David—let me say David—I wouldn't trench upon to any but you. If anybody else had been in my place, for the last few years, he'd have had both Mr. Wickfield and his daughter under his thumb, as one might say—under his

thumb! There would have been loss, disgrace—I don't know what all. Mr. Wickfield knows it—his daughter knows it—I am the humble instrument of humbly serving him. You won't think the worse of my humbleness, if I make a little confidence to you, will you?

David. No, no—certainly not—go on!

Heep. (Wipes hands with pocket-handkerchief.) Well, then Miss Agnes.

David. Well, Uriah!

Heep. How delightful and refreshing, to be called Uriah, spontaneously. You thought her looking very beautiful—did you not?

David. I thought her looking, as she always does, superior to everything and everybody around her!

Heep. Oh, thank you!—thank you for that!

David. For what?

Heep. Why, that is, in fact, the confidence that I am going to take the liberty of reposing. Oh, Mr. Copperfield, with what an affection I love the ground my Agnes walks upon!

David. (Aside.) The serpent. I should like to strangle him—but I must remember her request.

(Aloud.) Have you made your feelings known, Mr. Heep?

Heep. Oh! No—no—not to anyone but you! I'm too humble. I'm not in a hurry. I know you wouldn't like to make unpleasantness in the family. (Enter WICKFIELD, AGNES, and MISS TROTWOOD.) Ah, my dear benefactor, partner, and friend! I'm rejoiced—humbly rejoiced to see you looking so well! What a blessing it is to me to feel that I can relieve your mind of the weight of business, and give you time to devote to the affection of your family.

Miss T. What is that creature twisting about like a conger-eel for? Well, Wickfield, I suppose I may trust to you that my securities are going on prosperously?

Wick. I—a—yes—

Heep. Certainly, certainly! I will guarantee that they are all safe, my dear madam. I think I deserve more than a shudder for that lie!

(Aside to Agnes.)

Miss T. Well, that's all settled. But, what's the matter with you, man? Where are all your life and spirits! I declare, Agnes—my pretty Agnes—mopes about, too, as if some black spell were on the house. (To Heep.) What's the cause of all this, sir?

Heep. Nothing, my dear, madam, nothing! We may not be as racketty and high-spirited as formerly, but we are happy in our way. Are we not, Mr. Wickfield?

Wick. Certainly, Mr. Heep. (Aside.) The wily scoundrel!

Heep. Are we not, Miss Agnes?

Agnes. Yes, Mr. Heep.

Miss T. That yes sounded very like no! There's some pestilence in the air—but it's no business of mine! Well, Wickfield, I've been telling your daughter how to invest my funds, as you seem to have grown somewhat rusty in business matters—and Agnes is worth the whole firm in my opinion.

Heep. (Bowing, &c.) If I may humbly make a remark—I should be only too happy if Miss Agnes was a partner.

Miss T. Dence take the man! What is he about? Do stand up straight, sir, if you can. Don't be galvanic!

Heep. I humbly ask pardon, Miss Trotwood. I know you are nervous.

Miss T. Don't presume to say so! I'm nothing of the kind, sir! If you're an eel, conduct yourself like one—if you're a man, control your lumbs!

Heep. I am only here in the way of business partner. If Mr. Wickfield thinks he can do without me, I humbly take my leave.

Wick. No, no, Urial, I can't do without you—you must remain!

Heep. Oh, what a reward that is to the humble mind!

Miss T. Come in then, both of you, and let us settle this business about Trotty's proctorship. Don't squirm so, sir, walk upright!

Heep. It ain't in my power—I'm so humble. Mr. Copperfield, remember what I said.

Miss T. Trotty, I have secured lodgings for you at a Mrs. Micawber's; they'll be expecting you, so lose no time.

David. I shall but say a few brief parting words with my good angel, Agnes, and then for a life of energy and perseverance!

[*Exeunt David and Agnes, R.—The rest, L. E.*]

SCENE III.—*Peggotty's Ark—low door, L. 2 E.*

Enter MRS. GUMMIDGE, L. 1 E.; *seats herself at fire.*

Mrs. G. Ah, just as usual—nobody here. I'm a poor lone creeter, always.

Enter CLARA PEGGOTTY, L. 2 E.

C. Peg. Bless us and save us! heart alive, mother—who, in the name of gracions, do you think is a-coming to see us, as nateral as life, and more?

Mrs. G. No one to see me. I'm a poor, lone creeter; no one cares for me—no one—no one!

C. Peg. Yes, dear mother, but we do, all of us. But who do you think it is? Who, but Master David! I hain't seen him since the day that blessed soul, his mother, laid her sweet head down upon her stupid, cross Peggotty's arms, and died like a child as was gone to sleep. Here he comes, with brother, and Ham, and someone else.

Enter DAVID AND PEGGOTTY, L. 2 E.

C. Peg. Oh, my blessed, dear baby,—that was man,—that is—haven't you been and gone and sprouted up like the lilies of the field, and hasn't your blessed angel of a mother, that is in heaven, lent you her sweet smile, to make everybody take to you, and love you, whether they will or no?

David. Thank you, my dear nurse, for the warmth of your attachment.

C. Peg. This is mother, you know—Mother! why—don't you see Mr. David?

Mrs. G. I'm a poor, lone creeter.

Peg. (*Crosses to Mrs. G.*) Same as ever, Mass'r Davy—thinking allays on the old 'un as was drowned!

David. Poor soul! poor soul! Let her silent sorrows be respected— Well, Peggotty, and how is Barkis? Is he with in?

C. Peg. Don't, Master David, don't. I can't abide it—drat the man—he keeps following me about, and saying nothing. I don't know what it's a-going to come to, for my part.

Peg. I do.

C. Peg. Do you, Mr. Saucebox? then keep it to yourself. Master David doesn't want any of your information, leastways, on that subject.

Peg. But where's your friend, Steerforth? Why, there he is, a talking to Emily, with Ham on t'other side of him.

Enter EMILY and STEERFORTH, HAM following—(*his eyes constantly on Emily and Steerforth*)
—L. 2 E.

Peg. There's our Em'ly, Mass'r David; ain't she growed? (*Steerforth and David go up.*) Come here, you puss, you!—Ain't she a reg'lar mermaid, Mass'r Davy? Ah, we a'most spoils her here,—we're all so mortal fond of her—ain't we, puss?

Emily. (*C.*) You are—indeed, you are too kind to kind to me, all of you.

Peg. No! we ain't, none of us! Oh, I'm so happy to-night—this here blessed night, of all others! Somethin's been done to-day—Ham knows it, so does Em'ly, too. Don't blush, princess! I must tell you all summt. I can't keep it in no longer. You see, this here little Em'ly, as is a blushing now—you see, this here little Em'ly, as has been in my house—I calls it a house—has been, what no one but such a bright-eyed creeter can be in a house. I am rough, sir, rough as a sea-poreupine; but no one can know how dear our little Em'ly has been to the heart that's kivered up in here. Well, there's a certain person as has knowed her, from a baby upwards—not much of a person to look at, some't of my own build, werry salt; but, on the whole, an honest sort o' chap, with his heart in the right place—

C. Peg. (*To Ham.*) Will you keep quiet, and don't be a fidgeting about, like a St. Vitus's dance?

Emily. Pray, let me retire to my own room.

Peg. Not a bit on it, till I lets out the whole story. Well, what does this here tarpaulin chap do, but he loses that ere 'art of his to our Em'ly, follers her about like a great Newfoundland dog, and never has no relish for his wittles!

C. Peg. Just likes Barkis!

Peg. Now, all I wants in the world is, to see our Em'ly under articles to an honest man. If I was to be capsized in a gale of wiud, I could go down quiet, if I thought there's a man ashore there, iron-true to my little Em'ly, God bless her! Well, that there thing happens this here day—that there tarpaulin chap came in with my Em'ly's little hand in his great fist, and says he to me, "Look here—this is to be my little wife."

Steer. (*Aside.*) What! Not if I can prevent so disgraceful a sacrifice.

Peg. And she says, half-bold and half-shy, "Yes, uncle, this is to be my honest, brave husband,"—and then Mrs. Gummidge she gave a shout, and I flung up my hat! There, the murder's out, and I says, Hooray! to all on it, in three times three!

C. Peg. (*To Ham.*) There, why don't you go and be happy? I never did see such a queer sort of a sweetheart! (*They force Emily and Ham together.*) Well, what do you say, dummy?

Ham. Nothing but this: Dear Emily, there ain't a gentleman in all the laud, or yet sailing on the sea, that can love his lady more than I. I love you. You are too good for me—that's all.

Emily. No, no, Ham—no! Not good enough! Pray, let me go—I am faint. (*Aside.*) Ah! I have

been rash and hasty—too hasty. What is to be come of me I know not!

[Exit, L. 2 E.]

Steer. She doesn't seem overpowered with her good fortune.

David. It's her timidity and gentle bashfulness.

Steer. Not a bit of it! I have some knowledge of human nature. That lout loves her, though. See how fixed he stands, as if he saw her still!

Peg. What, gone? (*Goes up to door.*) Bless her soul, she couldn't bear to be looked at. Hollo, Peg! It's your turn next!

C. Peg. What do you mean, you sea-hedgehog?

Peg. Barkis! Come, Ham, let's bear away! Two's company, you know on certain occasions. Gummidge is nobody, and the gen'l'men would may be like a walk by the shore

David. I have a visit to make. I must go to my good friend, Mr. Wickfield, and make my parting adieu to him, and my almost sister, Agnes!

Steer. Come along, then—we wouldn't intrude for the world, especially at such a time.

C. Peg. It ain't nothing of the sort, now. So there you're out.

David. Ah, Peggotty!

C. Peg. Well, how do I know as it is so, when he never says nothing, but just comes in here about this time, every two or three days, dnmms down a lot of stuff he calls presents, sits silent for a few minutes, and if I get a sentence out of him, it's a sort of miracle? (*At door.*) Good mornin', Mr. Barkis!

BARKIS enters with large bundle, containing apples, a small pig, bird cage, string of onions, and boot-jack. He shakes hands with Peg—nods and winks—seats himself beside her, and takes out his presents one by one—pausing between each. When they are all out, shakes bag, makes two or three efforts to speak, and rushes out.

C. Peg. Well! did anybody ever see the like? Barkis. (*Putting his head through window.*) "Barkis is willing."

[Peg. throws the presents aside in a pet. All laugh, and exit L. and F.]

SCENE IV.—Micawber's Room. A turn-up bed—Children in it. All the et ceteras of plate, &c. MRS. MICAWBER discovered.

Voice. (*Outside.*) Pay us, will you? Mrs. M. Oh, voice of dire destiny. It's the boot-maker!

Voice. There's no use in saying that you're out! Mrs. M. And Wilkins is now indulging in the delicate and dangerous operation of shaving!

Voice. Ain't you going to pay us?

MICAWBER rushes in, half shaved, and flourishing a razor, R. 3 E.

Mic. Partner of my woes, and sharer of my responsibilities, the accents of dire and implacable Fate, through the vulgar lips of a low-bred Snob, now bellowing fruitlessly for payment of an inconsiderable sum, announces to us the melancholy fact, that the foundation is sapped, and the tower begins to totter!

Voice. You ain't nothing but swindlers!

Mic. Ha! Listen to that opprobrious epithet, which was never before hurled at the head and

front of an unoffending Micawber! The drop has worn away the stone—the last feather is added to the load of the world-laden camel! The tempered steel is left alone! Come, friendly razor! Bid farewell to soap, and prepare to revel in carnage!

Mrs. Mic. Oh!—don't!

Mic. In gore!

Mrs. Mic. Wilkins!

Mic. Blood! Red blood, red sanguinary gore!

Mrs. Mic. My Wilkins, be a Roman! The boot-maker is gone!

Mic. Then the aspiring soul of a Micawber rises superior to its destiny! Emma, my love!—thou sublimated essence of conjugal consolation, lay the flattering unction to thy soul, that thou hast saved thy Wilkins! The drowning wretch has snatched at the rope! There's a sweet little cherub now whispering within the innermost recesses of this lacerated bosom, that in the diurnal approximation—within the—in fact, next twenty-four hours, something will turn up. And when this inscrutable piece of nature's handiwork—this mortal, in point of fact, body, shall emerge from the gloom, never shall I forget the heart that felt for the distresses of others, or the hand that never shrunk from the temporary disposal of such available property as could be made away with!

Mrs. Mic. My Wilkins! My heroic, struggling Wilkins—never shall your Emma desert you—never!

Mic. Soother of my insufferable sorrows, I need not asseverate more, under existing circumstances, than the—in point of fact, simple, but impressive, especially when a number of algebraical characters are appended thereto—word of two but short syllables—*Ditto!* Now, darling, exercise your maternal duties, while I continue the painful but necessary task, of removing the superfluous—in fact—*Shave!* (*Sings,* "The sun his bright rays may withhold, love." (*Bell rings, he stops short.*) Ah! mark the dire vicissitudes of my wretched career! When my emancipated soul was soaring on seraphic wings, through circumbient regions of extatic joy—to be dragged down, pinioned, and double ironed to the marble floor of insatiable destiny, by that mechanical combination of miserable wire and hollow-sounding brass—a—in point of fact, bell! Sever the agonizing chain of terrible suspense—is it tradesmen, or taxes?

Mrs. Mic. Neither, beloved! Banish despair! It's the new lodger—I see his boxes!

Mic. Then being gone, I am a—I think I may venture to say—man again! Despair is gone, and joy once more irradiates the soul of Micawber! Will my Emma give a loose to the mirthfulness of the moment, and tread with me through the familiar but fascinating mazes of the College Horn-pipe?

(*They dance—Officer comes on, and taps Micawber on shoulder—he falls on bed, where children are. They squall, &c.—Curtain descends on confusion.*)

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*Micawber's Room*—MRS. MICAWBER attending to twins.

Mrs. Mic. If that brauch of my family, which refused its influence and support to Mr. Micawber, were to see me drudging in this miserable place, surely they would partially patch over the blot on their escutcheon with a few bank notes, until something turned up. (*A knock, d. F.*) The baker! long account; the staff of life is in arrear. I must dissimulate. Hush! (*Knock louder.*)

Heep. (*Without, L. D. F.*) Is Mr. Micawber at home?

Mrs. Mic. It's only Mr. Heep, Wilkins' new friend. He can't have advanced any thing temporary yet. (*Opens door.*)

Heep. Good morning, my dear Mrs. Micawber. Is my excellent friend at home?

Mrs. Mic. No, sir. At present, he is doing battle with the external world, snatching the precarious morsel for self and little ones, I may say, from the very jaws of destiny!

Heep. (*Aside.*) So much the better. I must find out if he will suit my purpose. (*Aloud.*) Mr. Micawber has no permanent employment, I presume?

Mrs. Mic. Alas! none. I did hope that the influence of my family would be exerted to place him in some political or commercial position, where his great talents might be seen and appreciated.

Heep. He is really doing nothing, then?

Mrs. Mic. Nothing definite. The opinion of the more friendly part of my family evidently points to coals. Wilkins himself rather prefers the wine; but, alas! I am afraid the long-dreaded crisis is at hand. We have tried to buffet against the current, but the tide is mastering our efforts. I don't mind intrusting the secret to you:—With the exception of the heel of a Dutch cheese, which is not adapted to the wants of a young family, there is really not a scrap of anything in the larder! When I was with papa and mamma, I was accustomed to speak of a larder—what I mean to express is: there's nothing to eat in the house!

Heep. Dear me! dear me! (*Aside.*) This is just the reckless scapegrace that I want.

Mic. (*Outside, L. D. F.*) Bolt it! (*Rushes in, and riles chairs against door.*) The cup is drained, the bolt has fallen,—the tree crushed! The accumulating combination of miserable circumstances has done its work, the tempest has burst, in overwhelming fury, on the devoted bark, and Micawber is a wreck!

Officer. (*Without.*) Open, in the name of the law!

Mic. Catiff, I despise you! Burglar, I defy you! Secure within the Briton's birthright, standing within the castellated mansion of my forefathers, my banner hangs upon the outer walls, my foot's upon my native heath, my name's Micawber!

Offi. (*Outside.*) Very well, I can't wait.

Mic. In the words of the immortal Plato,—“It must be so, Cato!” Why should a man wield an unequal conflict with tyrant Fate who is possessed of shaving materials?

(*Rushes towards door, is caught by Mrs. Micawber.*)

Mrs. Mic. No, no! not now!

(*Struggles with him.*)

Mic. The steel! the friendly steel!

Mrs. Mic. Alas! his miseries have blinded him! Don't you see your friend, Mr. Heep?

Mic. Ah! come to my arms, and be as dear as ever. Even as the beacon-light is to the storm-tossed mariner, so is that friendly face to the rescued Micawber. (*Officer pushes chairs away from door, and with one leg inside, the other outside.*) Ha! marauder! respect the threshold of hospitality.

Offi. (*Head in.*) I ain't coming in, nor I ain't a going out. I've got my prog, and here I'll stay until this 'ere account is paid, or you come with me.

Mic. Emma! I'm inextricably, in point of fact, flooded!

Mrs. Mic. I never will desert you, Wilkins!

Heep. Come, come, don't despair. You may find a friend yet.

Mic. Who talks of friendship to a wretch like me?

Heep. I do.

Mic. Ha! a ray of sunlight dawns upon my soul; the clouds of gloom are dispersing; something is about to—in point of fact, turn up.

Heep. How much is this demand?

Mic. Originally a trifle to, I believe, the butcher?

Mrs. Mic. Butcher.

Mic. Sundries for sustenance—seven pound six.

Heep. Is that all.

Mic. Bless your unsophisticated soul, no! Divers accumulations have ensued—the little bill got wafted into Chancery Lane, where it mounted into the celestial sphere of law, until it has become a legal comet, with an irradiating tail of costs! Original bill—£7 6s.—present sum total, £25 6s. 8d.!

Heep. I'll pay it.

Mic. My dear sir, you lay me under a pecuniary obligation the eradicating finger of time can never obliterate within the tablet of my memory. Enter, myrmidon! (*Enter Officer.*) Hats off, sir, in the respectable presence of a solvent debtor! Respect the man who pays three hundred per cent., without a pang. Go, sir; go; and boast amongst your fellows, that I, too, have murdered a Peruvian!

(*Officer exits.*)

Heep. You'll give me your I. O. U. for the sum, just as a matter of form?

Mic. Certainly, my best friend—any description of prospective pecuniary liquidation, from thirty days upwards.

Heep. Just sign this, then.

Mic. (*Taking paper.*) Hail! youngest born of an extensive paper progeny! Would that I had the pie-bald brethren back, like stray sheep, within the folds of my pocket-book! There, sir,—there goes another small liability,—renewable, I suppose, at the usual terms?

Heep. My very dear friend, give yourself no concern touching this. I will make it easy for you to take the matter up.

Mic. My prophetic soul; How so?

Heep. By giving you instant and permanent occupation in my own office—that is to say, office of self and partner—Wickfield and Heep, attorneys at law.

Mic. Fate—I have no hesitation in asserting the fact—you're a trump! Something has turned up at last!

Mrs. Mic. And just the channel through which your talent can burst upon an astonished community! Papa always said that you had a judicial

mind—who knows but you may become Lord Chancellor!

Mic. My dear, let us not anticipate the decrees of fortune. If I am reserved to wear the Chancellor's wig, I am at least prepared externally. My heart, relieved from its oppressive load of grief, bounds at the anticipation of—of—in short, a small sum of ready money.

Heep. How delightful, that a humble individual like me, has the power to diffuse happiness! Won't you allow me, my dear madam, to snatch Mr. Micawber for a short period from domestic felicity, so that he may be inducted in his new vocation?

Mrs. Mic. Oh! certainly. Wilkins, go on and prosper.

Mic. Such, partner of my joys and hopes—such is my intention. Poverty, and thy attendant train of writs and executions, avaunt! Farewell the scanty meal, and unsatisfied internal arrangements! Welcome, once more, the substantial repast—the in point of fact, beef-steaks and bottled porter! Micawber's occupation—I may say, is about to commence!

SCENE II.—*Peggotty's Ark.* Enter L. 2 E., PEGGOTTY, CLARA, MRS. GUMMIDGE, and DAVID.

David. And so your name is Barkis, now Peggotty?

C. Peg. Yes, sir. Good gracious me! bless my soul, yes, Master David—C. P. Barkis. You see, Barkis was willin, and I was willin—and as there was nobody pertickler to care about, I took to caring about him—and as we got to caring about each other, why we didn't think it worth while to care about anybody else. So what did we do, but we up and went and got married.

David. Well, he's a worthy good fellow, although he does talk so little.

C. Peg. La, bless your heart alive! he's got over that! Why, he sings about the house from morning till night, like a two-legged tea-kettle on the non!

Enter DANIEL PEGGOTTY, L. 2 E., down R.

Peg. Ah, Mas'r Davy, bo! this here's a unexpected pleasure! I be main glad to see you! Mother—thinking always of the old 'un—never got a word out of her! Sit you down, sir; no need in saying welcome to you—you know you are, to all on us! We're all here, but Ham and Em'ly; there's her place—she'll be here soon. (*Lights candle, and places it in window.*) Mrs. Gummidge, there you are, lighted up as usual! You're a wonderin what that's for, sir? That's for our Em'ly! You see, the road's not over-good, so I turned the light there—that you see, meets two objects. She says, says Em'ly, "That there's home"—and likewise says Em'ly, "Uncle's there"—for if I ain't here, there ain't no light!

C. Peg. Why, you're a baby, Dan'l! Always, and always will be nothing in the blessed world, but a baby!

Peg. (*Crosses to c.*) Well, I don't know but I am—not, maybe, to look at!

C. Peg. Not exactly!

Peg. No! Only in the feelin'! Why, that 'ere candle—I knows very well, that arter she's married an' gone, I'll put that there light there just the same as ever, and pretend I'm expecting her, just like I'm doing now! There's a baby for you, in

the shape of a great sea-porkypine! Right for all that—for here she is!

Enter HAM, hurriedly, L. 2 E.

Peg. Where's Em'ly?

Ham. (*Aside to David.*) Here, sir, a minute! I don't want him to know, not yet! She's gone, sir!

David. Em'ly!

Ham. Gone! She that we all loved—gone!—and how is she gone!—when I would rather see her dead, here at my feet! Read this!

(*Giving him letter.*)

Peg. What's the matter? Tell me! I will know it! Em'ly is hurt—there has been some terrible accident! She is—

David. Gone! (*All cry and rush to Peggotty.*)

Peg. Read, sir, read! Slow—slow—I don't know as I can understand!

David. (*Reads.*) "When you, who love me better than I ever have deserved—even when my mind was innocent—see this, I shall be far away."

Peg. "I shall be far away!" Em'ly—far away! Well!

David. (*Reads.*) "When I leave my dear home—oh! so dear—it will be never to come back—unless he brings me back a lady. God bless all. I'll pray for all, often, on my knees—and I don't pray for my own self. My parting love to uncle—my last tears for uncle." (*A pause.*) I entreat you, sir, to have command over yourself!

C. Peg. Daniel! My own dear Daniel!

Peg. Who's the man? I want to know his name! There's a man suspected—who is he? For some time past there has been a servant lurking about here, and a gentleman! They belonged to each other! Is it—I daren't speak the name—is it—

David. Steerforth!

Peg. The villain! The dam'd, black-hearted villain! (*Goes for coat.*) Bear a hand with this! Bear a hand and help me! Now, that there hat!

C. Peg. Oh, Daniel! Where are you going?

Peg. I'm going to seek my niece! I'm going to seek my Em'ly!

C. Peg. Where?

Peg. Anywhere! I'm going to seek her through the world! I'm going to find her in her shame, and bring her back! Don't try to stop me! I'm going—and never—never shall these bones find rest—until she's found! Oh, Em'ly!—Em'ly!

(*Sinks on seat by table.*)

SCENE III.—*Wickfield's.*

Enter HEEP and MICAWBER, L. 1 E.

Heep. Well, my excellent friend, how do you like your new employment?

Mic. An oasis, a literary and arithmetical oasis in the dreary desert of my life! It is a great pursuit, sir—a great pursuit, the study of the law! To be sure, to a man of exalted imagination, the objection to legal studies is the amount of detail—the mind may not have liberty to—in fact, soar—and the column of life becomes a mere succession of monotonous six-and-eightpencesstate. I'm thankful, immeasurably thankful to you, my disinterested benefactor! (*Sits to desk.*)

Heep. Then, my good friend, you can have no conscientious scruples about copying whatever I dictate?

Mic. Demolisher of my pecuniary embarrassments, how could I—why should I? You ere. Enough! (*Crosses to R.*) I'll have use for you ere long—now go to the office.

[*Exit R. 1 E.*]

Mic. Use for me! Disquietude flutters in my diaphragm! Use for me! I feel as if the devil were playing backgammon for my soul, and had just thrown sixes! Can it be, that villainous destiny has rescued Micawber to be a tool! If so, they shall find that he will be an edged one—an—in point of fact, chisel! But I'll prove, before I doubt, and then!

Enter DAVID, L. 1 E.

David. You here, Micawber?

Mic. My dear young friend, this is a meeting calculated to impress the mind with a sense of the instability—in fact—how do you do! You find me domiciliated here, through the instrumentality of an—in point of fact, friend—one Heep. You know him?

David. I do, indeed, thoroughly! How do you like him?

Mic. (*Shuts door.*) When a man's pecuniary embarrassments vanish before the breath of an individual, and when that individual opens his heart and his purse—one would necessarily feel inclined to honour that individual by the sacred title of—in fact, friend.

David. Certainly! but—

Mic. Allow me! I am here in a position of trust, and I would prefer not to trench on delicate subjects. I trust I give no offence to the companion of my youth!

David. Not at all!

Mic. Enough! Friend of my soul, enough! Follow the flowery path which destiny has marked out and gravelled smoothly for your footsteps, and if ever, in the course of sublunary events, pecuniary difficulties should overshadow it, remember that my right hand has not lost its cunning, and the name of Wilkins Micawber is yours, on the face of any description of negotiable paper.

[*Exit, L. H.*]

Enter AGNES and MISS TROTWOOD, followed by HEEP, R. 1 E.

David. Dear Agnes, I'm so glad to see you. I trust your father is well?

Heep. What should ail him, Mr. Copperfield? Nothing, I should say, Miss Agnes?

Miss T. Drat that eel of a creature! Why don't he keep himself quiet?

Heep. I can't—I really can't—I'm so humble!

Miss T. Here's Wickfield. How changed he is! Can that be guilt? I don't believe it! (*Aside.*)

Enter WICKFIELD, L. 1 E.—*Agnes runs to him, and assists him to chair.*

Agnes. My dear father—Miss Trotwood and David are here.

(*Wickfield covers face in his hands.*)

Heep. Mental capacity quite gone—quite gone!

Wick. And who has banished it? Who?

Heep. That's what I should like to know. But we are here on business, I presume?—the business about Miss Betsy Trotwood's securities!

Wick. Torturer!

Heep. I believe, Miss Trotwood, I wrote to you that they had been—

Miss T. Stolen.

Heep. Pardon me—mislaid—that was the observation.

Miss T. No, it was not. Here's your letter, in which you distinctly state that they were stolen, and you do most unmistakably hint—don't tie yourself up in a double knot—that a near and good friend of mine—

Wick. (*Starting up.*) Did he!

Heep. Well, suppose he did. Humble as I am, I have power enough to stick to the truth. You all know how humbly I came into this office, and although circumstances are changed, I am humble still. I know that I have been useful, very useful—have I not, brother partner?

Wick. Yes, yes.

Heep. Have I not, Miss Agnes?

Agnes. Yes—I believe so, Mr. Heep.

Heep. Call me Uriah. You would if he wasn't here, you know.

Agnes. Well,—Uriah.

Heep. I humbly thank you. Well, in my humbleness and usefulness, there was a great, a glorious recompense, that shone upon the distance like a radiant star. I need not say that I allude to the sweetest of her sex, Miss Agnes Wickfield. To be her father is a proud distinction; but, to be her husband—(*Wickfield starts up.*)—to be her husband—

David and Miss Trotwood. Her husband!

Heep. I spoke plain enough—and that's what I intend to be. I have a better right than any other man.

Wick. No, no!

Heep. Well, since you force me to the extremity—Miss Trotwood's securities were stolen—and there stands— (*Pointing to Wickfield.*)

Agnes. No, Uriah—I am—

(*Wickfield, with a cry faints.*)

David. (*Striking Heep.*) Dog!

TABLEAUX.

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*A Room at Wickfield's.*

AGNES and HEEP enter, R. H.

Heep. Well, I have given you the alternative. You know best; it ain't for a humble individual like me to dictate. If you marry me,—and, really I don't see any remarkable sacrifice in that—the happiness of our little social circle will be complete. If you don't, I shall most reluctantly be obliged to make public revelation of your father's dishonour!

Agnes. Silence, sir! I cannot, will not believe it!

Heep. Even if he should acknowledge it himself!

Agnes. No! My firm reliance on his integrity would still be unshaken. By cunning stratagem and plot you may make the right look wrong, but never can you force me to harbour one suspicious thought against him!

Heep. But should a jury of twelve honest men agree—

Agnes. Ah! a Court of Justice! To be in a position, even were it only of doubt, before the public gaze!—You, surely, would not be so utterly inhuman?

Heep. I'm really afraid I would, my—won't you allow me to say—love! It is no use for you to beat your little heart against the bars. Your father's honest name is dearer to you, surely, than a mere thing of inclination. You are in my power, wholly—my silence must be bought, and my price is you.

Agnes. Infamous trafficker,—peace! You may drive even the most passive heart to desperation!

Heep. What would you do?

Agnes. I know not—anything!

Heep. But save your father's good name!

Agnes. Tempter! Fiend! Who destroyed it, and with it the peace of this once happy family? Who crept like a pestilence within our midst, to poison every breath of life? Who led my unsuspecting father, step by step, to the brink of this impending destruction? Who but you? subtle and designing villain,—you!

Heep. Yes; I believe I did manage tolerably well, in my humble way, or I should not have the sweet anticipation that now warms my heart. Come, come; you had better yield to your fate. There's no escape—you must be my wife.

Mic. (Entering L. D. F.) Never!

Heep. What do you mean, mountebank?

Mic. I believe the enunciation was sufficiently distinct in which I gave utterance to that euphatic word, *never!* Nev-er say die!

Heep. Fool! You shall suffer for this, ungrateful scoundrel! If it were not for me, you would be swallowing swords for a subsistence!

Mic. I know I would. I haven't the remotest idea why I interrupted the conversation at that particular moment; but this I know, thou ensnarer of souls, and tripper-up of limping consciences,—that my peace is shattered, and my power of enjoyment destroyed! The canker is in the flower, the cup is filled to the brim, the worm is at his work, and will soon dispose of his victim! I can endure it no longer. I would rather be a mountebank, travelling through the country, swallowing swords and eating the devouring element! I came to find, and tell you so, and that's what brought me here at this particular juncture of—in point of fact—time.

Heep. Miss Agnes, I shall leave you to ponder on what I have told you. Remember, to-morrow must decide.—Away, fool!

[Strikes Micawber, and exits, L. H.]

Mic. A blow! The burning brand of indignity stamped irrevocably upon the brow of a Micawber!—It wanted but this! Tremble, consummate scoundrel! I have that within my waistcoat-pocket which passeth show!

Agnes. Oh, sir! is there any means by which we can escape from the toils of that cunning wretch?

Mic. Amongst the clouds of coming events, I think I may venture to prognostigate a particularly large shadow will most probably prostrate itself before the pathway of that detestable scoundrel, Heep!

Agnes. Heaven grant it may be so, for my poor father's sake!

[Exit, R. D.]

Mic. So say we all of us! hip, hip, hurrah! (Enter DAVID, L. D. F.) Copperfield! never in the whole course of my distressful pilgrimage, even when you relieved the pressure of pecuniary

embarrassment, by a temporary loan, not yet liquidated, was I so rejoiced to see you, as at this transitory moment!

David. What's the matter?

Mic. What's the matter? What is not the matter? Villany is the matter! Baseness is the matter! Deception, fraud, conspiracy; and the name of the whole atrocious mass is Heep!

David. Heep!

Mic. H-e-e-p! The struggle is over! (Swims.) I'll lead this wretched life no longer! Give me back myself, substitute Micawber for the petty wretch who walks about in the boots now on my feet, and call upon me to swallow a sword, and I'll do it to-morrow morning, with an appetite, aye, even though I should be reduced to the extremity of seeing my children earning a precarious subsistence by personal contortion, while Mrs. Micawber officiated upon the organ!

David. Pray let me know, my good friend.

Mic. No, I repudiate the familiar expression! I'll grapple no man's hand until I have blown into fragments the diabolical serpent, Heep! I'll know nobody until I have raised a volcanic eruption, and hurled it upon the head of that interminable cheat and liar, Heep! I'll live nowhere until I have crushed into undiscoverable atoms, the transcendent and immortal hypocrite and perjurer, Heep!!! Come to-morrow, aunt, Agnes, everybody, and see if I don't pulverize into impalpable dust, the Arch Traitor and pernicious Slave, Heep!!!

[Exit dragging David, L. H.]

SCENE II.—Peggotty's Lodging.—PEGGOTTY discovered looking sad and dejected.

Peg. Not yet, not yet! A year of misery, and no news of my darling! Come back, my child, come back, even in the heart agony of sin and shame, come back, for should the harsh judging world spurn you, my poor crushed flower, there will be more need of one warm heart to rest your drooping head against! (Enter DAVID, L. D. F.) Ah! Mas'r Davy! (Rises.) Thank'e, sir, thank'e! for this visit you be kindly welcome, sir! There's her place, sir, ready, and some warm clothes, when she comes back, and the light is in the window at home, in the old spot, to show her, if mayhap she should get there first, that home and hearts are open to her yet!

David. (Aside.) I must break it to him by degrees. (Peg. deeply moved. Aloud.) Mr. Peggotty, are all well at home?

Peg. Well, and hearty, sir, all except poor Barkis, he's gone, sir—said he was willin, and went out with the tide!

David. Mr. Peggotty, don't expect much.

Peg. Ah, you have heard news!

David. I have.

Peg. Of Emily! Alive?

David. Yes. At least, I hope so!

Peg. And coming back? Yes, yes! Say that she's coming back!

David. It may be that she is—at all events, she has left him.

Peg. She is alive, sir—my Em'ly is alive, and coming back. I have known it awake and asleep, that I should find her, and I will! Oh! It can't be, that the blessed hope which has held me up while I've been seeking her through land and sea is to be beaten down at last! Mas'r Davy, I don't

know where it comes from, or how it is, but I'm sure she is near me now!

David. Bear it like a man, Daniel—she is.

Peg. Ha! I know it here! I knew deep in my heart! Where is she?

David. Nearer than you imagine, Daniel.

Peg. No, not if she was within the reach of my arm. She is, she is— (David goes to door, L. H., and brings on EMILY.) Em'ly, still our pet, our darling—have I found you at last? Don't turn away from me, my sweet, sorely-tempted lamb, but come close, close to my heart! There, poor child, poor child!

Emily. I dare not lift my sinful eyes, uncle. I don't deserve a thought or word of kindness now.

Peg. You do, my poor, faded lily—now more than ever. It was no fault of yours—it was I to blame for not watching over you. But come, I have you now—never to be parted again. Never, never! Come, darling, home, home—where all hearts are open to you—home, where your great sorrows shall be washed by our joyful tears. Come, pet, come.

[Exit, L. H.]

SCENE III.—Wickfield's Office. COPPERFIELD, TRADDLES, and MISS TROTWOOD discovered. Table and Papers. Enter MICAWBER.

Miss T. Now, sir, we are ready for Mount Vesuvius, or any other eruption.

Mic. Madam, I trust you will shortly witness a pyrotechnic display! You are aware that you are assembled here, to witness the betrothal of Uriah Heep, Esq., junior partner in the firm of Wickfield and Heep, and Agnes, sole daughter of the senior of ditto, of ditto.

Miss T. Yes, yes—I know we are come to see a girl sacrificed to a fish, also to have some definite idea how the funds of Betsy Trotwood have been abstracted. This you promise.

Mic. Promise, and vow!—but 'tis not yet the time. Perhaps, under existing circumstances, madam and gentlemen, you would submit yourselves, for the moment, to the direction of one, who, although on the eve of departure for a foreign clime, feeling this too crowded hemisphere does not give his aspiring soul sufficient elbow-room, would consecrate the few hours yet left him in the land of his forefathers, to an act of justice! Further this deponent sayeth not, but the simple announcement that you may expect an—in point of fact—look out for squalls!

[Exit E., bowing.]

Enter HEEP, with AGNES on his arm, followed by WICKFIELD.

Heep. Now this is kind—this is indeed very kind of you all!—Copperfield, my legal friend Traddles, and all, to gather round so humble an individual, on this auspicious occasion! Things are changed in this office since I was an 'umble clerk—but I'm not changed, Miss Trotwood!

Miss T. Well, sir, to tell the truth, I think you are pretty constant to the promise of your youth! Oh, for gracious sakes, don't try to twist yourself into a corkscrew!

Heep. Oh, thank you, Miss Trotwood, for your good opinion! Well, fellow partner, here we are—nothing remains but the delightful task of signing

the preliminary documents, to the completion of my happiness.

(Goes to table, and arranges papers.)

David. Dear Agnes! You will not sacrifice yourself, from a mistaken sense of duty!

Agnes. To preserve my father's honourable name I would cheerfully yield up life itself!

David. But could it be preserved in any other way?

Agnes. Oh! I would bless the means, and devote my life to any other but that mercenary wretch!

David. Trust in Heaven, Agnes, who will never suffer the wicked to triumph! Restrain your emotion for a short time.

(Heep having spread paper, comes down stage to Wickfield. MICAWBER, who has come on unscen, quickly changes paper, then takes up large ruler.)

Heep. Come, fellow partner, my humble signature is made.

Wick. No, no! 'Tis monstrous! I cannot, will not selfishly sacrifice my daughter's happiness for life! Come what may—pour what infamy you can upon my head, I will not sign!

Heep. Oh, very well! I was prepared for this! The officers are at hand.

Mic. (Aside to Wickfield.) Sign, but first read!

Agnes. A moment! Sign, father, I am content!

(Wickfield goes up, and looks at papers.)

Wick. What's this! The missing securities belonging to Miss Trotwood!

Heep. Ha! Who has done this?

Mic. I did—with the concurrence of my legal friend, Mr. Thomas Traddles, Esquire!—the mountebank, the sword-swallower, whose soul you thought you had purchased for a few miserable I. O. U.'s!

David. Agnes!

Agnes. Life, hope, and honour recovered! I am thine, thine for ever!

(They embrace.)

Heep. Oh, ho! This is a conspiracy! You have met here by appointment! You're a pretty set of people, ain't you, to buy over my clerk, who is the very scum of society; but I'll have some of you under the harrow! As for you, Micawber, I'll crush you yet! Give me that pocket-book—you had better!

(Micawber hits him with ruler.)

Mic. Approach me again, and if your head is human, I'll break it, you heap of iniquity! Why, this is nothing to the proofs we have obtained—my legal friend and self—of the infernal villainies, and malpractices, and forgeries, by which you have been years acting upon the parental affections, and sense of honour—until you have plundered and cajoled this noble-minded family to the very jaws of destruction!

Heep. Perhaps you may think this a triumph, all of you? But, beware! I know enough about you all! I'll have revenge—deadly, desperate revenge! I've not done with you yet! (Going.—Enter Officers.) Who are you?

Mic. The officers you had in readiness to arrest Mr. Wickfield! Oh, you had your plot beautifully laid—all but the last scene! It's exit Heep and officers—not officers and Wickfield!

Heep. Foiled!—Ruined!—Undermined! May the curses—

Mic. Ladies, sir, ladies! Respect feminine nerves, and retire decently to, in point of fact, jail! Who's swallowing swords now!

(Exit Heep and officers.)

David. My Agnes restored! What can I do for you?

Wick. My peace of mind recovered! My friend!

Agnes. My father's good name preserved! My benefactor!

Miss T. My money returned! Good fellow!

Mic. You overpower me! All that this waif and stray upon life's ocean will now venture to ask is that you will, collectively and individually, receive from the water's edge the valedictory remarks of him, who subscribes himself your most devoted friend, Wilkins Micawber. Farewell, farewell! Be happy in your respective domestic circles—and especially, let nobody forget—for I never shall—the companion of my youth, the dissipater of my pecuniary difficulties, DAVID COPPERFIELD. ESQ.!

THE END.

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